

MINEHEAD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT FOR 1949.

The Registrar General's figure for the population of the town is 7,232; the figure for 1948 being 7,249 and for 1947, 7,037. The usual seasonal increase in the population commenced during June and lasted until the middle of September. With few exceptions hotels, boarding houses and apartments closed down for the winter. As will be seen later in this report conditions on the whole were good and the health of the town showed no marked variation from the normal.

Vital Statistics.

	Total.	M.	F.
Live Births - Legitimate	84	42	42
Illegitimate	4	3	1

Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 12.17

	Total.	M.	F.
Deaths	143	55	88

Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population 19.77

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age:-
All infants per 1,000 live births :- 34.09

Water Supply.

In spite of the prolonged drought the water supply has been maintained without any curtailment at any time. The storage water in the Nutscale Reservoir was heavily drawn upon, but was able to meet all the demands. Owing to the irregular growth of the town the distribution of the ample supply is not entirely satisfactory. The whole question of storage and distribution is the subject of a report from your Surveyor, and the whole matter of remedial measures is to be dealt with in 1950. The alterations envisaged will be extensive and will require considerable dissection and consideration before a definite decision can be arrived at.

As to quality, the supply to the town of treated water from the main reservoir is satisfactory. Nineteen samples of raw water, that is untreated water, were taken during the year. These were not all entirely satisfactory. Nineteen samples of treated water were taken with satisfactory results.

No action has been taken in respect of any reported contamination as any such action involves the very extensive alterations at present under consideration. Any attempt to deal with the water supply piecemeal would be uneconomic and probably ineffective.

A slight degree of plumbo-solvency detected in the Alcombe supply has not so far called for any action. The matter is, however, the subject of correspondence with the Ministry.

All the dwelling houses (2,285) in the town are supplied from public water mains direct to the houses.

Approximately 100 yards of 3" main were laid in Hopcott Close to improve pressure.

Swimming Pool.

The chlorination, and organisation of the management of the Pool have been found to be thoroughly efficient.

Samples taken at regular intervals have been tested and passed as satisfactory,

Sewage Disposal.

No sewerage works have taken place during the year. Flooding of certain low-lying parts of the town by storm water, the result of excessively heavy rain and its resultant inconvenience, calls for early consideration and action. The whole question of storm water drainage has been considered and discussed for some years, but so far no adequate solution of the problem has been arrived at and no comprehensive scheme has been put into action. This matter is one for priority.

Food.

No outbreaks of food poisoning have been reported during the year.

Meat and other Foods.

Meat is prepared for human food at the Minehead Abattoir, from where it is distributed throughout the districts of Minehead, Watchet, Williton and Dulverton. So far as is practical, all animals are inspected ~~before slaughter~~ and all carcasses and offal are inspected in accordance with instructions laid down in Memo. 62 Foods, and appropriate action taken where required.

All places where food is prepared, etc., including the Abattoir, shops, stalls and vehicles, are inspected from time to time and action taken as required. Generally, the cleanliness of these establishments and vehicles is satisfactory.

Carcasses inspected and condemned.

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
No. Killed.	409	240	743	7,273	144
No. Inspected.	409	240	743	7,273	144
All diseases except tuberculosis	1	4	4	29	2
Whole carcasses condemned.					
Carcase of which some part or organ was condemned.	86	194	5	255	7
Percentage of the No. inspected affected with disease other than tuber- culosis.	21.27	82.50	1.21	3.90	6.25
Tuberculosis only Whole carcasses condemned.	6	4	2	-	-
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	11	51	-	-	1
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis.	4.16	22.92	0.27	-	0.69

Milk.

The milk supply during the year was satisfactorily maintained. Samples taken from time to time that did not come up to the required standard were investigated and the cause ascertained and remedied.

- (a) The total number of Registered Dairy Farms at the 30th September, 1949, was 5.
- (b) The total number of Retailers was 5.
- (c) The number of Producer-Retailers included in (b) was 2.

Manufacture of Ice Cream.

The regulations governing this manufacture and the requirements implicit in them have tended to restrict the preparation of ice cream to the large wholesale houses. The distributors find it more profitable to purchase their ice cream in bulk.

Fifteen samples of ice cream submitted for examination during the summer showed that the bulk of the ice cream was of a relatively high grade.

Housing.

The total number of houses is 2,285. Thirty-five houses were erected during the year; thirty three by the Local Authority and two by private enterprise. One dwelling-house was converted into flats. Twenty-three houses were in course of erection at the close of the year.

As to the housing requirements in the future, your Surveyor informs me that no estimate can be given of the number required until a survey of all existing property and occupants is made. As to whether living conditions are unsatisfactory no reasonably correct statement can be made without the survey mentioned in the previous sentence.

The total number of applicants for Council Houses at the end of the year was 267.

Factories Act.

The Register of Factories has not been kept and is at present incomplete. No report on its administration can therefore be included in this report.

Overcrowding.

As far as is known no statutory overcrowding exists.

Infectious Diseases.

Epidemics of measles and whooping cough occurred during the period under discussion. There were no deaths. During the country-wide epidemic of acute poliomyelitis five cases were reported in the Minehead district. There were no deaths.

Cases requiring institutional isolation are sent to Taunton Isolation Hospital.

Tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis shows a considerable drop in cases notified. Eight were recorded against sixteen in the previous year. There were five deaths.

All cases of Tuberculosis are dealt with at the Tuberculosis Clinic.

Disinfection of premises after infectious disease is carried out by the Local Authority, also after cases of an unhygienic or unpleasant nature.

Hospital.

The Minehead & West Somerset Hospital is entirely administered by the Bridgwater, Minehead & Butleigh Management Committee.

Local representation in the management of the Hospital still exists in the House Committee of the Hospital which is empowered to make representations to the Committee of Management and is responsible for its day to day supervision.

Structural alterations have been and are now taking place to improve its accommodation, particularly with regard to the Out-Patient Departments.

Ambulance Services.

During the year under review the ambulance services vested by the Ministry in the County Council have been carried out by the St. John Ambulance Brigade to the entire satisfaction of the community. Under the arrangement with the County Council the cost of the running and maintenance of the ambulances is the concern of the County Council. Two full-time trained ambulance drivers are maintained. The remainder of the Service, which includes all night work, is carried out by the local ambulance and nursing divisions. This part of the Service is entirely voluntary and maintained with the financial support of the general public.

Clinics.

Clinics, with the exception of Infant Welfare, are now held at the Minehead & West Somerset Hospital.

Until the accommodation is complete at the Minehead Hospital the Tuberculosis Clinic will remain at its present habitat.

It appears in conclusion therefore that the sentence in my first paragraph is broadly true - the health of the town shows no marked variation from the normal. There are, however, one or two matters that are worth noting. In the vital statistics you read that the total deaths were 143. This is the highest number recorded since the beginning of the War, and the death rate 19.77 is also the highest recorded in that period.

With regard to the age groups, 90 occurred over the age of 70, and of these 45 occurred between 70 and 80; 39 between 80 and 90 and 6 at 90 and over.

Of the causes of death, I will only mention diseases of the heart accounting for 57; Cancer for 19, and intracranial circulatory diseases for 19. These are matters of interest, but of no special significance by themselves.



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The other matter that strikes one is the very important work that lies before you - the containing, the distribution and the sterilisation of the ample water supply - the solution of the problem of the surface water in relation to the sewerage - the necessity of a complete survey of the existing property and its relationship to the occupants.

All these matters are urgent and must be dealt with in order to maintain the town's hitherto high reputation.

I take this opportunity of recording my thanks to the Council for their co-operation in the matters that I have brought before them, and to its Servants for their courtesy and help in all matters dealing with the Public Health Department.

W. BAIN

M.B., B.S., Lond.

August 1950.

